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SUBJECT: TOGO: REO VISITS MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT, DEPARTMENT OF FISHERIES OFFICIALS, PEACE CORPS NATURAL RESOURCES PROGRAM MANAGER.

¶1. (U) The REO met with Fisheries department officials, the Secretary General of the Ministry of Environment and the Natural

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Resources program manager for the Peace Corps. The REO visited the artisanal fishing vessel basin and a fish smoking facility.

Fisheries

¶2. (SBU) The fisheries officials are aware of the needed elements of a comprehensive fisheries management program. The unstable political situation, current GoT priorities, and much needed financial support challenge even the most skilled fisheries management and scientific officials. Officials mention the need for research and a baseline survey/assessment of fish stocks as the single most important part of Togo's fisheries management program. Fisheries officials report an annual fish catch of about 200,000 tons (artisanal, commercial and aquaculture) and they report that about 60% of the recorded catch is transformed into smoked fish/fish product for consumption.

All of the commercial fishing vessels operating out of Lome (number not known) are foreign flagged, fishing under license to the GoT. Officials estimate there are 400 to 600 artisanal fishing vessels operating out of Lome. Illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing was reported as a concern and enforcement against IUU fishing is a challenge since the naval fleet is comprised of two outdated patrol vessels. To further compound the situation, limited resources of the military and the navy make them susceptible to coercion and make enforcement difficult.

Recommendation: Fisheries issues could be used for gains in other areas of concern; human rights, health and economic growth. Particular focus could be given to women's efforts and pivotal role in the sector and raised awareness via public diplomacy initiatives.

Environment

¶3. (U) Officials are hopeful to re-engage stalled environmental action plans to improve basic oversight and services across the sector (potable water, sanitation, solid waste, air quality. Post could initiate an awareness effort for environmental education aimed at primary school children.

Natural resources- Forestry

¶4. (U) A small scale, community-co-managed cross border agro-forestry project may be possible at the Togo/Ghana border. Ghana's forestry sector is advanced by all comparisons and the import of sector expertise is one avenue to promote regional

cooperation and economic growth. The REO will explore the concept of a cross border initiative with contacts in Togo and Ghana.

15. (U) This reporting cable has been cleared by Embassy Lome.

PERGL